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compatible. But not all Coorgs have horoscopes, and marriages are frequently arranged without resorting to the Kaṇiya astrologer.

Coorgs formerly resorted to the Kaṇiya on every conceivable occasion. If an ox strayed, or if someone was ill in the house, the Kaniya was consulted. It was believed that he was able to tell, by consulting the planets, whether the strayed ox would return and whether the patient would recover. Sometimes he suggested the performance of some rite which would enable, for instance, the ox which had strayed to return home and the patient to recover. Perhaps a minor deity or spirit like Guḷika, or an ancestral spirit, was annoyed because it had not received the necessary attention from the members of the particular joint family. The Kaṇiya would then suggest the performance of appropriate propitiatory ritual.

The Baṇṇa and Paṇika are two low castes, originally from Malabar, who are very similar to each other and who actually perform the ritual which the Kaṇiya prescribes for his Coorg client. These two castes stand in a relation similar to the one in which the dispensing chemist stands to the doctor in the Western world. The Kaṇiya says, for instance, that the ancestors of his client are angry because they have not been propitiated for a long time, and he suggests the performance of the *kāraṇava téré* which is an elaborate propitiation of ancestors lasting over a day. The Baṇṇa (or Paṇika) actually performs the elaborate ancestor-propitiation at which the ancestors of the Coorg joint family possess the Baṇṇa oracle.[1]

Each Baṇṇa family serves a group of villages which they are under an obligation to serve. Besides ancestor-propitiation and other occasions when their services are wanted by families, Baṇṇas play very important parts at the festivals of village-deities where they are oracles, dancers, and cutters of the sacrificial animals.

Coorgs come into contact with the blacksmith, carpenter, and goldsmith usually in non-ritual contexts. The blacksmith and carpenter make the agricultural implements and domestic articles, and also help in building the massive houses of Coorgs. Some of the articles made by them, like the bier and palanquin, are used on ritual occasions.

The goldsmith, in addition to making the gold and silver orna-

[1] Richter's *Manual of Coorg*, pp. 169–70, contains an example of the kind of service which the Kaṇiya performed with the aid of the Baṇṇa.

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ments, ritually bores the ears of boys and girls. Formerly, the ritual boring of a boy's ears was an important initiation rite, marking his transition from boyhood to adulthood.

The clothes washed by the washerman (Maḍivāḷa) are not only clean but ritually pure (*maḍi*), and ritually pure clothes should be worn on ritual occasions. The washerman's services are necessary on every ritual occasion. For instance, at a Coorg wedding he has the duty of supplying clean cloths for the bridal pair to walk on, and cloths to cover the ceiling above the bridal seat. He has similar duties at the festival of the village-deity. He also acts as the ritual purifier when a birth or death occurs in a Coorg house. But some Coorgs, especially those in Kiggaṭnāḍ, resort to the Brahmin for ritual purification.

Contact with a barber defiles a Coorg, and every Coorg has a purificatory bath after being shaved by a barber. Such a bath is necessary in order to restore the shaved person to normal ritual status. The barber's services are, however, indispensable at a wedding and a funeral, and shaving is an essential preliminary act for men on ritual occasions.

The Mēda occupies a very low position in the caste hierarchy. He makes artefacts like baskets, fish-traps, and receptacles of cane, *vōṭé* reed, and bamboo. He is indispensable at a Coorg festival, dance or hunt, where he beats his tom-tom. The Mēda is a byword for stupidity in Coorg folklore.

The strength of the bond prevailing between the Coorg master and his Poleya servant expressed itself in ritual. Formerly, one or two members of the Poleya servant-family observed ritual mourning for their dead master or mistress. On the day their mourning terminated they were given gifts of cloths and provisions by their masters. The Poleya servants (men) also performed a mourning dance (*anga kaḷi*) in front of the master's house before the corpse was removed to the burial-ground.

At a Coorg wedding, just as the bridal pair are about to leave the bride's house for the groom's, a Poleya servant of the bride's family comes forward, holding a torch in his left hand, while he spreads a cloth before them. The groom throws money, equivalent to a *paṇa* (about three annas), on the cloth. The Poleya then removes the cloth, thus enabling the bridal pair to proceed: contact with a cloth touched by a Poleya defiles a member of a high caste.

Sometimes ritual occasions stress the structural distance that